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Eight young filmmakers were chosen in an open short film competition by the USAID to create films for HIV/AIDS prevention. The result was eight short films, mostly eight minutes long that offer compelling and unique perspectives of the issue. The eight films, which feature a celebrity cast, encapsulate a number of regional languages besides Nepali including Maithili, Dutteli, and Achhami along with story lines that are firmly based on small realities but are equally relatable.

The length of the films manages to keep the story lines clean and unadorned by the dramatisation that HIV/AIDS is often portrayed with. HIV is shown to be something that can be lived with and because the examples are so grounded, the message does not come across as didactic: no one will be spared by the virus. The filmmakers cover settings unjudgementally across several different layers and regions of Nepali society.

One of the films that comes strong in its simplicity is Horn Please, which tells the story of a conductor who dreams of becoming a driver and exceeding his boss' overt promiscuity. He changes his mind when his boss contracts HIV because of his ignorance and the boy loses his job.

Sonam follows a charming panwala and the people he meets at his shop to tell the story of a girl who works at a dance bar, whose lovers are unaware of her promiscuity. Each of the lovers are convinced that having unprotected sexual contact with ones lover will not be harmful. The film puts across its message although HIV is never mentioned-that is, no one can be trusted to be faithful.

The issue of transferring HIV from the husband to the wife through an unfaithful partner, mainly men who have several partners and having sex without condoms where they work in the city is

featured in Bhok. A wife un-knowingly transfers HIV to her lover after being infected by her unfaithful husband. Another film Kamala follows a woman who is infected by her husband who comes back from the city. She finds salvation in Mithila art and her child who is born uninfected.

The filmmakers undertake youth culture in urban Nepal in a lighthearted manner. Although some issues could have been delved into more deeply such as intravenous transfer of HIV, teenage sex and blood transfusions. Whatever has been shown exposes the ignorance that underlies the vulnerability to the disease.

The directors are careful not to present the characters without making any attempt to engage in petty finger-pointing or in sugar-coating reality with a thick layer of false pity. This makes them all the more compelling because they do not attempt to draw the attention of the audience with theatrical emotion but rather tell the stories of their characters and their suffering in quiet dignity.

One of the films will be awarded in a ceremony on 13 December 2008 at Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza. The program, along with the eight films, will be telecast live on Avenues and Sagarmatha television channels from 4.30 PM onwards.

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